

IN THE CLAIMS:

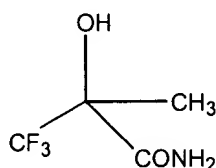
Please amend claim 35 as follows:

35. (Amended) The process of claim 30 wherein the microorganism is selected from the group consisting of the species *Klebsiella oxytoca* PRS1 (DSM 11009), *Klebsiella oxytoca* PRS1K17 (DSM 11623), *Klebsiella planticola* ID-624 (DSM 11354), and *Klebsiella pneumoniae* ID-625 (DSM 11355).

Please cancel claim 39.

Please amend claims 41-44 as follows:

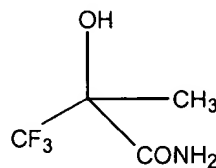
41. (Amended) A biologically pure culture of a microorganism wherein said microorganism utilizes propionamide of the formula:



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in the form of the racemate or of its optically active isomers as the sole nitrogen source; and wherein said microorganism is selected from the group consisting of the *genus* *Arthrobacter*, *Bacillus*, *Klebsiella* and *Pseudomonas*.

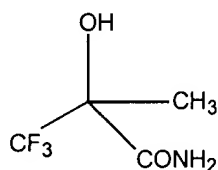
42. (amended) A biologically pure culture of a microorganism wherein said microorganism utilizes propionamide of the formula:



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in the form of the racemate or of its optically active isomers as the sole nitrogen source; and wherein said microorganism is selected from the group consisting of the species *Klebsiella oxytoca* PRS1 (DSM 11009), *Klebsiella oxytoca* PRS1K17 (DSM 11623), *Arthrobacter ramosus* ID-620 (DSM 11350), *Bacillus* sp. ID-621 (DSM 11351), *Klebsiella planticola* ID-624 (DSM 11354), *Klebsiella pneumoniae* ID-625 (DSM 11355) and *Pseudomonas* sp. (DSM 11010).

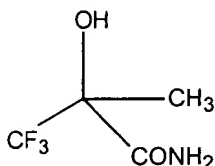
43. (amended) A cell extract derived from a biologically pure culture of a microorganism wherein said microorganism utilizes propionamide of the formula:



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in the form of the racemate or of its optically active isomers as the sole nitrogen source; and wherein said microorganism is selected from the group consisting of the genus *Arthrobacter*, *Bacillus*, *Klebsiella* and *Pseudomonas*.

44. (amended) A cell extract derived from a biologically pure culture of a microorganism wherein said microorganism utilizes propionamide of the formula:



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in the form of the racemate or of its optically active isomers as the sole nitrogen source; and wherein said microorganism is selected from the group consisting of the species *Klebsiella oxytoca* PRS1 (DSM 11009), *Klebsiella oxytoca* PRS1K17 (DSM 11623), *Arthrobacter ramosus* ID-620 (DSM 11350), *Bacillus* sp. ID-621 (DSM 11351), *Klebsiella planticola* ID-624 (DSM 11354), *Klebsiella pneumoniae* ID-625 (DSM 11355) and *Pseudomonas* sp. (DSM 11010).

REMARKS

This is in response to the Official Action mailed March 21, 2003 for the above-identified patent application. Claims 28-44 are pending in the application. Claim 35 and 41-44 have been amended as is further discussed below. For reasons set forth in detail below, Applicants request that all objections and rejections be withdrawn and that the pending claims be allowed.